



# Higher Economics — draft Course rationale and summary

May 2011



This edition: May 2011, draft version 1.0

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ  
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2011

# Contents

<b>Course rationale</b>	<b>1</b>
Background	1
Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles	2
Purpose and aims of the Course	2
Information about typical learners who might do the Course	3
<b>Course summary</b>	<b>5</b>
Course outline	5
Course structure and conditions of award	6
Assessment	8

# Course rationale

## Background

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

The Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills needed to understand the impact of economic issues.

The Course gives learners an appreciation of how markets and governments work and how the decisions taken in these economic contexts influence and affect our daily lives.

Studying economics will enable learners to become better informed and more responsible citizens, consumers and producers by developing an awareness of the importance of the economic dimension to our lives.

Learners will be more confident and successful in the economic choices they make and will be able to make a greater contribution to society as their understanding of economic situations increases.

The Course covers a broad area of learning that allows for further progression and depth of study at a later date, as well as allowing learning to develop in a challenging and enjoyable way. Understanding and applying the key concepts of economics through real-life contexts ensures that its relevance to learners is far-reaching.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

Economics is about choice and the impact of choice. It relates to every aspect of our lives, from the decisions we make as individuals or families to the structures created by governments and businesses. An economic way of thinking can help learners make better choices relating to their life and work.

The Course looks at the role of government, business and global trade. It explores the economic environment in which these aspects are set.

The Course aims to build on the knowledge, understanding and skills gained in Economics (National 5) or, for some learners, can act as an introduction to economics. It is designed to develop an understanding of the economic environment in which we live through understanding economics concepts set in real-life contexts.

The main purpose of the Course is to highlight how important economic concepts, government policies and international trade are to our everyday lives. It will build on learners' own experiences as consumers and, in addition, help them to interpret economic situations through the application of these concepts.

A main feature of this Course is the development of numeracy and thinking skills; learners will be able to understand and make use of economic information to analyse, interpret, predict and explain the actions of individuals, businesses and governments in various economic situations.

The Course will develop learners' ability to think logically and to consider the reasons for and the effects of economic situations and policies.

The Course aims to enable learners to:

- ◆ expand and deepen understanding relating to how economic systems and markets work and how they affect our daily lives
- ◆ develop an in-depth understanding of economic problems and the ability to consider options to explain and offer possible solutions to them
- ◆ develop confidence and decision making by providing opportunities to use initiative in solving economic issues
- ◆ extend numeracy skills by being able to analyse and interpret complex economic data from a variety of formats, such as tables, charts and graphs
- ◆ extend skills of reasoning to encourage critical thinking in providing economic solutions to complex economic problems from a range of sources
- ◆ develop literacy by extending skills of analysing, evaluating and communicating complex economic information in a clear and concise way

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

The study of economics will appeal to learners with an enquiring, logical and analytical mind. Learners will analyse economic data and information in order to find solutions to economic problems and be able to communicate these solutions effectively.

The Course develops the necessary skills of thinking skills, numeracy and literacy, and supports employability, enterprise and citizenship. It takes into account the needs of all learners by providing sufficient flexibility to enable learners to achieve in different ways and at a different pace.

Learners' understanding of economic situations, and solutions to economic issues, will deepen. They will be able to identify between differing sources of information and to distinguish between facts and value judgements. They will have the ability to evaluate economic data from a variety of economic issues in order to make informed decisions.

By developing many transferable skills, the Course prepares learners for everyday life, the world of work, or further study of economics and other business-related disciplines. It deepens understanding of economics and

highlights a range of career opportunities that are available within all sectors of the economy.

By studying this Course, learners will develop skills and attributes which include: developing an in-depth understanding of economic environments, which may enhance employability opportunities; and extending analytical thinking by applying economic reasoning to explain how individuals, firms and governments solve complex economic problems.

Learners will also: develop decision making by interpreting, analysing and evaluating a range of economic information to solve complex economic issues; extend numeracy skills by being able to interpret complex economic data from charts, tables or other graphical forms; and develop literacy by being able to draw logical conclusions based on relevant economic evidence.

Successful completion of this Course opens up a range of vertical and lateral progression routes for learners. These include other National Qualifications, National Certificates, Higher National Certificates, Higher National Diplomas, and degrees in business-related subjects. It may also lead to employment and/or training in various industries.

# Course summary

**Course title: Higher Economics**

**SCQF level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)**

## Course outline

### **Mandatory Units**

Economics of the Market (Higher)	(6 SCQF credit points)
UK Economic Activity (Higher)	(6 SCQF credit points)
Global Economic Activity (Higher)	(6 SCQF credit points)

### **Course assessment**

(6 SCQF credit points)

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for 40 additional programmed hours to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

## **Course structure and conditions of award**

The Course is theoretical and experiential in its nature. Skills, knowledge and understanding are developed through a range of contexts within the broad discipline of economics.

The Course consists of three mandatory Units. Within each there is a degree of flexibility in how study is carried out. By its nature, the Course develops a wide range of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, by providing learning opportunities in real-life contexts.

These skills include: an analytical and evaluative way of thinking; numeracy skills, by being able to interpret economic data; processing economic data into useable information; and working with others to solve economic issues.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways.

However, there is scope in the design of the Units to allow the Course to be taught in an integrated, experiential way.

### **Economics of the Market (Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will develop skills, knowledge and understanding, and carry out learning activities that will allow them to analyse the economic problem of unlimited wants in relation to limited resources and how this affects the daily choices made by us all. Learners will examine a range of economic systems and analyse how supply and demand drive resource allocation and economic production. This provides learners with an in-depth understanding of economic systems and markets.

### **UK Economic Activity (Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will expand and deepen skills, knowledge and understanding, and carry out learning activities that will allow them to analyse government income and expenditure. They will also evaluate the role of public and private sectors in the economy. They will learn to assess the policies and other methods the government uses to influence the balance of the economy, and to assess the influence of Scotland in the UK economy. The Unit allows learners to consider the implications of government action and to suggest solutions to basic and more complex economic issues and problems.

### **Global Economic Activity (Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will expand and deepen skills, knowledge and understanding, and carry out learning activities that will allow them to interpret and analyse the global nature of economics. Learners will evaluate the comparative position of the UK in relation to other countries in global economic terms. They will investigate issues relating to global trade and the role of international aid. This will provide learners with an in-depth understanding of global economics and its social impact.

*successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor*

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Draft

## Assessment

Information about assessment standards for the Course will be included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which will provide full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

### Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in Unit specifications.

They will be assessed pass/fail within centres.

SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

### Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)<sup>1</sup>. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Economics Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

This will be assessed through a combination of an economics [question paper](#)<sup>2</sup> and an economics-related [assignment](#)<sup>3</sup>.

The question paper will require demonstration of a breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills accumulated from across the Course.

The economics-related assignment will extend the learners' economics knowledge and/or skills, and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Definitions can be found here: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html)

<sup>2</sup> See link above for definitions.

<sup>3</sup> See link above for definitions.